

7 Reasons Why I Believe the New Jerusalem Will Be Near the Earth in the Millennium

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. I believe the New Jerusalem will be in close proximity to earthly Jerusalem during the Millennium.
- B. There are *seven reasons* why I believe the New Jerusalem will be *close to* and accessible to earthly Jerusalem during the Millennium but will not actually *on the earth* until after the Millennium.

II. THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCENDS TO THE EARTH TWICE

- A. In my opinion, the New Jerusalem will descend to earth, **both** at the *beginning* of the Millennium (Rev. 21:10) and at the *end* (Rev. 21:2), when the earth has been cleansed with fire (2 Pet. 3:10).
²I, John, saw the holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...
¹⁰He...showed me the...holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God... (Rev. 21:2, 10)
- B. I agree with commentators who see Revelation 17:1-19:10 and 21:9-22:5 as parenthetical sections (in which end-time events are not described as they unfold in chronological sequence). These two parenthetical sections parallel each other—in each section, John received a vision from *one of the angels who had the seven bowls*, and in each section an angel showed John a “woman”—first the harlot Babylon (17:1-3) and then the Bride (21:9-10).
¹Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls...talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you...the great harlot...”³So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. (Rev. 17:1-3)
⁹Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls...talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”¹⁰He carried me away...to a great and high mountain, and showed me...the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven. (Rev. 21:9-10)
- C. I agree with commentators who see Revelation 21:1-8 as describing events that occur in chronological order **after** the Millennium and the final judgment (Rev. 20:1-15) and see Revelation 21:9-22:5 as referring to events **during** the Millennium. Thus, they conclude that the descent of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:2 occurs **after** the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10) while seeing the descent of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10 occurring at the **beginning** of the Millennium.
- D. By understanding the structure of the book of Revelation in this way, we see two descents of the New Jerusalem. I believe the New Jerusalem will descend the first time, coming close to earthly Jerusalem; then to the earth after it is “cleansed with fire” at the end of the Millennium (2 Pet. 3:10).
- E. In Revelation 21:1-8, the New Jerusalem (21:2) and the Father’s throne (21:3) will be on the new earth **after** the Millennium. I agree with commentators who see Revelation 21:9-22:5 as referring to the New Jerusalem **during** the Millennium. In Revelation 21:9-22:5, John described eternal and temporal aspects of life in context to the New Jerusalem. For example, the eternal state of the resurrected saints living in the New Jerusalem is pictured alongside the kings of the earth bringing the glory of their nations into the New Jerusalem from the millennial earth (21:24-26).

²⁴...the kings of the [millennial] earth bring their glory...into it [New Jerusalem]... (Rev. 21:24)

III. REASON #1—JESUS' THRONE IS IN BOTH JERUSALEMS

- A. Jesus' throne will be in the millennial temple on earth in Jerusalem *as well as* in the heavenly New Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:4-7; Zech. 6:12-13; Rev. 22:3). It is *one throne with two expressions*. Jesus' throne of glory will be in the holy of holies of the temple in earthly Jerusalem (Ezek. 43:6-7).

³*The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [the New Jerusalem]. (Rev. 22:3)*

¹⁷*At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. (Jer. 3:17)*

⁶*I heard Him speaking to me from the temple [millennial temple]...⁷He said, "This is the place of My throne...where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." (Ezek. 43:6-7)*

- B. Jesus' *throne of glory* (Mt. 19:28; 25:31) has an expression in both the New Jerusalem and in millennial Jerusalem. I suggest that it may be a vast "governmental complex" that includes the millennial temple and the throne of the Father and Son in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 4:2-8; 22:3). I picture the possibility of a vast governmental complex, with the "northern part" extending into the New Jerusalem and the "southern part" based in the temple in the millennial Jerusalem.

³¹*"When the Son of Man comes...He will sit on the throne of His glory." (Mt. 25:31)*

IV. REASON #2—THE SIZE OF MILLENNIAL JERUSALEM

- A. Jerusalem in the Millennium is either about 10 square miles or 80 square miles, depending on whether the measurement is 4,500 cubits or 4,500 rods (Ezek. 48:15-19, 30-35; 45:6). Some commentators suggest that the unit of measure used in Ezekiel is rods (10.5 feet), not cubits (about 1.5 feet). If Jerusalem is 4,500 rods by 4,500 rods (with a rod being 10.5 feet), then the city will be about 47,250 feet by 47,250 feet—about 9 miles by 9 miles, or about 81 square miles.

¹⁶*These shall be its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits [rods], the south side four thousand five hundred [rods], the east side four thousand five hundred [rods], and the west side four thousand five hundred [rods]. (Ezek. 48:16)*

- B. Since the New Jerusalem will be 1,380 miles cubed (Rev. 21:16), it will be far too large to rest on the city of Jerusalem on the millennial earth.

V. REASON #3—THE LEAVES THAT BRING HEALING TO THE MILLENNIAL NATIONS

- A. The leaves in the New Jerusalem are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2), but inside of the New Jerusalem there will not be any nations that need to be healed; rather, the leaves will be used to facilitate healing in the nations on the millennial earth. The nations will not need to be healed in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1) where there will be perfect righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13).

²*...on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits...The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations [in the Millennium]. (Rev. 22:2)*

- B. Thus, the New Jerusalem must be close enough to the millennial earth that kings with natural bodies, living on the earth, can have access to these healing leaves—to bring back to their nations.

VI. REASON #4—LIGHT FROM THE NEW JERUSALEM SHINES ON EARTHLY JERUSALEM

- A. The nations will walk in the light of the New Jerusalem. This is not conclusive, but it suggests that the brightness of the New Jerusalem will not be far from the earth as it is now. The New Jerusalem exists at this time, being filled with God’s glorious light (Rev. 21:11), which is not currently visible to the earth. [I like this. It allows for the questions, “Where is it?” and, “Is it heaven now?”]

²³The city [New Jerusalem] had no need of the sun...for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. ²⁴The [millennial] nations...shall walk in its light... (Rev. 21:23-24)

- B. The light shining on millennial Jerusalem will come from Jesus and His glory coming from the New Jerusalem, which will descend close to Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).

¹⁹The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light ...²⁰Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself... (Isa. 60:19-20)

- C. The sun and moon will not shine over Jerusalem as they will over the rest of the millennial earth because a canopy of glory brighter than the sun will be over the city and over all the assemblies (Isa. 4:5). The glory will be visibly seen over millennial Jerusalem (Isa. 60:2; cf. 4:5) even as God’s people saw His glory on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:16-20) and in the upper room (Acts 2:2-3).

⁵Then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering [wedding canopy]. (Isa. 4:5)

1. God will release His glory above every dwelling and worship assembly in Mount Zion. God’s presence will not be limited to a building, but it will be a canopy over all of Zion. When the people in Jerusalem look up, they will see the glory of the New Jerusalem.

2. ***Every dwelling place:*** The residence of some priests and their families will be in close proximity to the millennial temple (Ezek. 45:1-5) since they will serve regularly in the temple. The Shekinah glory of God will rest over their individual dwellings.

⁴It shall be a holy section of the land, belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary... it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. (Ezek. 45:4)

3. ***Cloud and fire:*** God led Israel in the wilderness using a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night (Ex. 13:21) as a symbol of His presence, favor, and covenant commitment to them. In Moses’ time, a cloud covered the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34). In the Temple, the cloud was confined to the holy of holies. In the Millennium, it appears over Mount Zion.

²¹And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. (Ex. 13:21)

³⁴The cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Ex. 40:34)

VII. REASON #5—THE MILLENNIAL KINGS ENTER THE NEW JERUSALEM

- A. The kings on the millennial earth will enter New Jerusalem to bring their glory and honor, which I believe will include their national resources and accomplishments (Rev. 21:24-26; 22:14).

²⁴The [millennial] nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the [millennial] earth bring their glory and honor into it...²⁶And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.²⁷But there shall by no means enter it [New Jerusalem] anything that defiles...but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev. 21:24-27)

- B. On the new earth (Rev. 21:1), there will be perfect righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13) with nothing that defiles it. Only godly people and kings will be allowed to enter the New Jerusalem.

¹³...[we] look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Pet. 3:13)

VIII. REASON #6—ANGELS WILL GUARD THE GATES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

- A. Angels seem to stand “guard” at the gates of the New Jerusalem to make sure that no one enters who does not have the right of entry and the right to the tree of life (Rev. 21:12, 27; 22:14-15). If this is so, the New Jerusalem must be close enough to the earth for this to matter.

¹²She [New Jerusalem] had a...high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates...²⁷There shall by no means enter it [New Jerusalem] anything that defiles...but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev. 21:12, 27)

- B. On the new earth (Rev. 21:1), there will be perfect righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13) with none who disobey God. Only godly people will have the right to enter the New Jerusalem.

¹⁴Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.¹⁵But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters. (Rev. 22:14-15)

- C. The angels who guard the gates of the New Jerusalem are a parallel to the angels who guarded the entrance to Eden and the tree of life after Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:22-24).

²²“And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”...²⁴So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen. 3:22-24)

IX. REASON #7—RESURRECTED SAINTS REIGNING ON THE MILLENNIAL EARTH

- A. The saints will live in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:4), but they will reign on earth (Rev. 5:10). This is not conclusive proof, but it suggests that the saints will live in the New Jerusalem, which will not be far from the earth where they will reign.

³...the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [New Jerusalem], and His servants [saints] shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face...⁵And they shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3-5)

- B. During the millennial kingdom, saints with resurrected bodies will rule the nations on the earth.

¹⁰And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:10)